

When someone wipes his brow and asks, "What the hell kind of name is that, anyway?" I say that it's probably German. Like Goethe.

Whom I used to refer to casually as, in high school, I also let it be known that my great great grandparents, being modest immigrants, had simply dropped the titled Von. Actually I was an aristocrat. Sure, Ronald Von Koertge The Twerp.

"Coeur," said Robert one day. "Maybe it's French." Could it be Ronald Heart, like in sweetheart? How wonderful. What did the Germans invent, anyway, but anal retentiveness.

But the French, they drink wine all the time and think nudity is okay. Now I can stop worrying that I would have looked good in a long leather coat. I have a great new hometown, France. Where, by the way, my great great great great grandfather invented the sweetest kiss of them all.

#### LAST MINUTE CHANGE OF PLANS

Cherry and I were going up the Club House elevator when she said, "Boy, I could find you anywhere in the world."

"How's that?" I ask idly, keeping my nose in a tough grass race for fillies and mares.

"I'd just go to the nearest track."

"What nearest track."

"Fairmount down the hill from your folks' house. Or the one in Tucson. Or Centennial, you liked Denver."

"Tracks are big places. You'd never catch me."

"Ha. You always go to the paddock. I'd just hang around there. You'd show up."

She studied Spanish while I messed around with deuces till there was a race I could bet. Now and then I would look over and smile, but I was thinking about sweet Julie in white shorts packing and, at this very moment, writing a note to her dumbfounded parents.